

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno's City of Springfield COVID-19 Situational Update

Friday, May 22, 2020

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno, in the best interests of our residents and business community, continues his daily morning meetings with his cabinet heads as they work 24/7 to facilitate and coordinate with all of our local, state, federal, and public and private partners in response to the COVID-19 situation.

Below are the most recent updates as reported from each City Departments.

Mayor's Office

- Continues to coordinate the city's efforts with all stakeholders (state, federal, hospital and medical facilities, public and private partners, etc.) in response of services and relief and recovery measures
- Continuing to monitor the COVID-19 situation closely so that the city does not reopen and ease prudent measures too early, which could potentially expose our residents to a second wave of the virus
- Continues to stress the need for additional target testing in order to build strong public, business, consumer, and hospital confidences to identify, isolate, contact trace, mitigate and heal potential hot spot areas
- Mayor Sarno and cabinet heads announced the city's Phase I reopening plans on Thursday, May 21, 2020
 - Municipal buildings will reopen to the public starting Wednesday, May 27, 2020, with restrictions and by appointment only
 - Provided guidance and information on the reopening of municipal government
 - Will continue to review all protocols and health and safety measures needed to be installed and implemented to reopen city operations in phases
 - Temperature checks and face coverings needed to enter city buildings
 - City facilities will reopen to the public by appointment only
 - Continuing to encourage residents and businesses to conduct city related business by phone or through the city's website
 - Provided a list of city departments contact info for residents and businesses to utilize to set up an appointment if city related business cannot be done remotely
- Continues to coordinate with cabinet and department heads on reopening aspects of all municipal buildings
- City Hall utilizing thermal infrared thermometers to proactively protect and preserve our workforce
- Need for additional thermal infrared thermometers to assist with reopening aspects

- Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey called Mayor Sarno to offer support and continued assistance from her office
- Mayor Sarno joined with Congressman Richard E. Neal, Veterans' Services Director Tom Belton, Deputy Veterans' Services Director Joe DeCaro and Health and Human Services Commissioner Helen Caulton-Harris at the city's annual Memorial Day Celebration
 - Mayor presented a proclamation and gave a speech acknowledging and honoring our veterans who gave the ultimate sacrifice
 - Congressman Neal spoke and acknowledged our veterans who gave the ultimate sacrifice
 - Veterans' Services Director Tom Belton gave remarks
 - Congressman Neal and Mayor Sarno laid the memorial wreath at the Veterans Monument and placed United States Flag markers at the monuments at Veterans Way
 - Mayor Sarno joined with Deputy Veterans' Services Director Joe DeCaro and Veterans Investigator Emmanuel Owusu for a wreath laying ceremony at the Veterans Monument at St. Michaels Cemetery
- Heartfelt thank you to our Springfield Community for stepping up with PPE donations, allowing the city to outfit our dedicated police, fire and frontline workers with the appropriate safety equipment
 - Sheriff Nick Cocchi and the Hampden County Sheriff's Department made and is providing 3,000 masks for city employees

Health

- Announced 47 new cases of Springfield residents testing positive for COVID-19 (Coronavirus)
- Total positive cases now at 2,142
 - City starting to see a leveling of cases, but as more target testing becomes available these numbers will most likely continue to increase - we must remain vigilant
 - 81 deaths of Springfield residents related to COVID-19
 - State has reclassified the 'causes of death' for prior deaths which may not have been attributed to COVID-19 related conditions and underlying health symptoms
 - 46 deaths reported from long term care facilities
 - 35 residential deaths
 - Average age of positives cases – 53 years old
 - Average age of hospitalizations – 68 years old
 - Average age of deaths – 82
 - 98.5% of deaths had underlining health conditions
- Continues to monitor potential COVID-19 cluster locations across the city, especially at our long-term care facilities.
 - National Guard Med Tech through state Department of Public Health and City Health Department continue to provide assistance with our long-term care facilities with testing aspects
- Continues to monitor stores and locations adhering to Governor's public health order for face coverings. Commissioner Caulton-Harris has also personally visited a number of stores and locations
- Commissioner Caulton-Harris through the City of Springfield Board of Health issued Regulation on Face Coverings
 - Mandating face coverings for all persons (with exceptions) to wear a face covering while out in public and where social distancing is not possible
 - Requirements for businesses to adhere to the regulation
 - Law enforcement and public health officials will enforce regulation

- City will focus on educational component for the first week to educate and remind residents and businesses of the Governors Order and city regulation
 - Issuing of civil fines will be last resort for those who continue to refuse to comply
- Mayor Sarno and HHS Commissioner Caulton-Harris continue to push and work with the state, local hospitals and healthcare facilities with community health outreach aspects to do much more symptomatic and asymptomatic testing, not only for homeless population, but for all targets
- Continuing with contact tracing
 - Over 1,100 contact tracing has been done so far
- Reviewing plans to expand city contact tracing abilities through Governor Baker's continued initiative efforts
- Announced the continued need and importance of adhering to all public health, personal hygiene and social distancing procedures. Still very important, even though hospitalization numbers are stable, public health is population based and community spread of the virus is still prevalent
- Homeless Triage facilities and operations up and running – results showing tactical strategy is working
 - 131 tested (all negative) at city's medical tenting triage facility on Worthington St.
 - 61 tested (45 negative) at Springfield Rescue Mission – Taylor Street site
 - 32 tested (all negative) at Springfield Rescue Mission – Mill Street site
 - 47 tested (all negative) at the Salvation Army – through partnership with Mercy
 - Total population tested - 271 individuals
 - Partnership with Baystate Health for testing at city's Homeless Triage Facility
 - Partnership with Mercy Medical for testing at the Salvation Army and Springfield Rescue Mission – Taylor Street and Mill Street site
- City of Springfield team collaborated with Mercy Hospital to test City of Northampton and the Town of Amherst homeless population in the western region – 172 individuals tested
- Continuing to review city's phased reopening plan
 - Senior centers will remain closed during Phase I but will continue to provide outreach and wellness checks
- City of Springfield COVID-19 hotline - (413) 750-3250 – staffed 7 days a week. 8:30am – 7pm.

Elder Affairs

- Continues to do wellness checks on a daily basis with people in senior housing complexes and associated with senior centers.
- Continues to deliver meals to seniors in need, including over the weekend.
- Senior Centers will remain closed during Phase I reopening
 - Will continue to provide meals, outreach and wellness checks

DPW

- 4 down
- Trash and recycling continue to be picked up
- Streets and Engineering continue to provide services
- Yard waste collection continues – possible collection into the weekend
- Household Hazard waste Collection schedule for Saturday, June 6, 2020 with vender
 - Call City's 311 Call Center for an appointment @ 736-3111
- Construction projects continue to pick up
 - Street line painting
 - Street paving

- Milling work
- Pot holes
- Central Street project bid is in
- Weekly Construction projects for the week of May 25, 2020
 - Kazbeck Street – utility work
 - Welland Road – utility work
 - Mill Street – utility work
 - Union Street – utility work
- Virtual meetings of Board of Public Works and Traffic Commission to be held – TBA
- Continues to assist at Central High School Oasis Foodbank aspects

Eco Dev

- Continues to review and secure additional funding for restaurant and small business assistance grants.
 - Between First and Second Round of the “Prime the Pump” grant program, city has now awarded over \$725,000 in grants to Springfield businesses
 - 45% of grants from the “Prime the Pump” were to minority businesses
 - 58% of the first round of ‘Prime the Pump’ grants for restaurants were awarded and contracted to minority and women owned businesses
 - 21% minority owned
 - 8% women owned
 - 29% minority-women owned
 - Reviewing potential plans for a Third Round of funding based on federal relief and recovery efforts which would include assisting small businesses and restaurants in reopening post-COVID-19
 - Reviewing plans for reopening of restaurants in phases, with phase I possibly involving outside dining in addition to their current takeout and carryout operations
- Continues to review and identify Federal stimulus funding to focus on local efforts for relief and recovery for our residents and small businesses
- Continues to work with HUD for spending of CDBG funds through the C.A.R.E. Act
- Reviewing and working with local businesses who have outstanding city and HUD loans for repayment extensions to avoid defaulting on repayment agreements
- Continues to review costs associated with COVID-19 response for relief and recovery reimbursements.
- Tracking national unemployment trends and numbers
 - 30% average unemployment city wide
 - 36% in 01105
 - 35.5% in 01103
 - Forest Park, East Forest Park and Sixteen Acres only neighborhoods under 30%
- Reviewing business and restaurant assistance for the city’s phased reopening plan, including but not limited to the closing off of certain streets
- Held a zoom conference call meeting with the new owners of the former Sears department store at the Eastfield Mall, along with the Eastfield Mall developers and stakeholders

Planning Board

- Scheduled virtual public hearing for June 3, 2020
 - Liquor license, zone change and site plan review for various establishments on agenda

Finance

- Provided an update to Mayor and cabinet heads on the projected revenue shortfalls by the federal, state and municipal levels. Reviewed the expected budgetary constraints for the city's FY 20 and FY21 budgets
 - Potentially looking at up to a 28% cut in state local aid or roughly \$11.3 million
 - CAFO TJ Plante joined a conference call with the city's Municipal Bond rating companies to discuss the industries future plans on understanding and reviewing municipal bond ratings across the Commonwealth and the nation during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Continues to explore all public and private means in which to secure additional PPE's for our Police and Fire Departments and our first responders and frontline personnel
- Continues to monitor all federal and state relief and recovery funding and reimbursement mechanisms
 - Springfield eligible for \$13.6 million from the state as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Recovery Security (CARES) Act's Coronavirus Relief Fund for states and municipalities
- Continues to review costs associated with COVID-19 response for relief and recovery reimbursements.
- Implementing strategic spending measures to identify areas of need, relief and recovery while also trying to maintain city services for residents and business community.
- Continuing to review and monitor with the Assessor's Department how the COVID-19 pandemic will affect local real estate sales as recorded with the Hampden County Registry of Deeds and the city's own local assessments of real estate.
 - Real estate sales for residential and commercial properties could potentially be affected due to the coronavirus outbreak, which would in turn, could have potentially negative results for the city's local assessment of property values potentially as soon as the FY21 budget
- Continues to monitor lost revenue – city and state
 - \$3.2 million in lost revenue – city
 - \$5.8 million in deficit spending – city
- Working on and reviewing austerity budget – potentially purposing a three-month budget until state aid from the state FY21 budget becomes clear. Shortfall in state budget revenue is estimated to be around \$4 to \$6 billion.
 - Continuing to monitor all deficit spending to keep essential services going for residents and business community's immediate needs
- Continues proactive meetings with Josh Norman of GP Strategies to track, identify, and implement relief and recovery reimbursement aspects.
- Continuing to review and monitor all city capital projects to keep them on track to the best of our ability and to extend deadlines if needed
 - 31 Elm / Court Square Project
 - Civic Center Parking Garage
 - Police HQ

Libraries

- Beginning printing of PPE masks on 3D printers
- Continuing to answer reference questions by phone and email
- Continuing to offer story times on social media sites

- Continuing to help residents access e-books and streaming movies and music on their devices
- Continuing to help residents learn, research, and explore, using our digital subscriptions and apps (language learning, grant searches, business research, children's homework help, etc.)

Parks and Facilities

- Consulting with Bob Kirchherr, CSP, Principal and Indoor Air Quality and Industrial Hygienist for O'Reilly, Talbot & Okun Engineering Associate to review the city's air systems at all municipal buildings – police and fire HQ, City Hall, Schools, etc.
- Continuing the deep cleaning of all city buildings and facilities
- Continuing to monitor our parks on social distancing aspects
- Installing signs at city parks reminding residents to wear face coverings when social distancing is not possible
- Reviewing plans for cleaning measures and maintenance of city parks for reopening phase
- Reviewing potential alternate site locations for homeless triage facility and population surge facility for short-term and long-term aspects pending the duration of pandemic if needed
- Continuing to review the city's phased reopening plan based on the Governors guidance and recommendations
 - Reviewing all protocols and procedures for short and long term reopening aspects
 - Reviewing and preparing for the reopening of city facilities for the summer, if public health and safety permits
 - Phase I
 - Parks continue to be open for passive recreation
 - Golf courses are open with restrictions
 - Tennis courts open with restrictions
 - Park toll booths will reopen
 - Farmers markets with restrictions
 - Forest Park Zoo pending the approval of appropriate health measures
 - Park picnics will be allowed with restrictions
 - Riverfront boating and kayak rents with restrictions
- Reviewing the health measures and facility needs for municipal buildings to begin a soft opening to the public - will adhere to state guidance and recommendations
 - Temperature check before entering
 - Hand sanitizer at each entrance and exit
 - Limiting entrances and exits to a minimum within building and fire code
 - Install protective health measures at locations where the public gathers and interacts with city staff
 - Reviewing air flow and ventilation systems in public buildings
 - Installing pedestrian traffic flow signs and 6 feet distancing floor decals in municipal buildings
- Reviewing with cabinet and department heads and with HR for reopening aspects
 - Installing health and safety measures at all municipal buildings
 - Providing city employees with proper PPE's to preserve workforce
 - Coordinating with each city department to identify the needs for Phased reopening
- Per Governor Baker's update to Essential Services guidance – Springfield Municipal Golf Courses opened on Sunday, May 10, 2020 under strict guidelines and restrictions
- Utilizing thermal infrared thermometers to proactively protect and preserve our workforce
- Park Commission approved opening plans for the Forest Park Zoo and Farmers' Market

- Farmers' Market can open Tuesday, May 26
- Zoo in Forest Park will open pending plans for staff to clean restrooms on a regular basis

Public Safety

Fire

- Down 2
- Reviewing plans to begin smoke detector inspections
- Announced Food Drive to help residents in need. Non-perishable food items can be donated and dropped off at city fire stations. Residents are encouraged to call ahead or ring the doorbell and to leave items at the door for social distancing aspects.
- Continues with proactive sanitizing and disinfecting measures
- Utilizing thermal infrared thermometers to proactively protect and preserve our workforce
- Responded to several local fires
 - SFD reminds residents to be mindful and careful with smoking materials and other flammable items

Police

- Personnel Status
 - 6 out due to coronavirus
 - 12 out due to injury
 - 16 have retired as of January 1, 2020
 - 8 pending retirements
- Continues to provide anti-crime activity
 - Heightened patrols with Sheriff's Department in city parks
 - Increase traffic enforcement – including special details with State Police to deter dirt bikes and drag racing activities
 - Increase attention on breaking and entering crimes – residential and commercial properties
 - Increase in domestic and restraining orders
 - Increase in mental health related calls for service – more Behavioral Health Network (BHN) staff added
 - Continues with positive community outreach activities where possible.
- Reviewing Governor Baker's Four-Phased reopening announcement
- Working with the Health Department on local enforcement aspects of Governor's face covering order which took effect on Wednesday, May 6, 2020
- Reviewing plans for reopening of Police Department facilities for access for the public for LTC applications and renewals, traffic accident reports and other license/permit needs by appointment
- Commissioner Clapprod announced that training will begin for officers with the body worn camera program on May 20, 2020 and will have the first phase of cameras active and in use by May 26, 2020
- The National Guard and State Police continue to work alongside SPD
- Continues with proactive sanitizing and disinfecting measures
- Utilizing thermal infrared thermometers to proactively protect and preserve our workforce
- Plans to secure 6 new police cruisers to continue with the social distancing aspects of having one officer per vehicle
- Continues to assist at Central High School Oasis Foodbank aspects

Schools

- To date, Sodexo has served 843,304 meals to Springfield Public Schools students since the program began on March 12th (meals included breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks)
 - 17 school sites
 - Additional site at Smead Arena / Central High School added to complement the Oasis Food Bank on Fridays
- Continues to distribute laptops to students for remote learning – over 10,000 are currently being given out, including to our homeless students, on top of the 7,000 our students had already been using prior to pandemic
 - Mayor Sarno allocates \$1 million in city monies to be spent on laptops for grades K-2 to support remote learning and to help provide summer enrichment learning aspects
- Following new Department of Elementary and Secondary Education guidelines for remote learning
- Continue to implement remote learning aspects for the remainder of the academic year and will review potential summer learning program options
 - School Committee adopted the recommendation of Superintendent Dan Warwick, as schools have been closed since mid-March and are now out for the rest of the academic year per Governor Baker's order last week, for a Credit / No Credit grading system for the 4th Quarter
 - New grading policy set to go out to students and families
 - Working on remote summer learning programs
- June 19, 2020 will be last day of school
- Congratulations to Class of 2020 lawn signs being placed throughout the city in support of our high school seniors during these challenging and difficult times
- Planning virtual graduations for Class of 2020 and in-person graduations as organized at the individual schools while following all social distancing aspects

Law/HR/Labor

- Continues to assist and advise all departments on pertinent city business
- Continues to review and monitor all federal and state legislation
- Reviewing potential guidelines, protocols and procedures for city employees to return to work in phases as the city begins to reopen under controlled safety and health measures
 - To protect and preserve our workforce – health and safety measures and protocols, and work place safety standards are being drafted for reopening phase for city employees and the public at all municipal facilities
- Reviewing Governor Baker's Four-Phased reopening announcement
- Reviewing with cabinet and department heads for reopening aspects
 - Installing health and safety measures at all municipal buildings
 - Providing city employees with proper PPE's to preserve workforce
 - Coordinating with each city department to identify the needs for Phased reopening
- Utilizing thermal infrared thermometers to proactively protect and preserve our workforce
- Preparing video for retraining of city employees for reopening aspects based on CDC and Health guidelines

Misc.

Food Bank

- Continue Oasis Food Pantry operations on Friday's 10-2pm through John Foley, Sodexo, School Department, Mayor's Office, DPW, SPD and Food Bank of Western

Mass – serving over 3,500 families with food and milk distribution at Central High School and Smead Arena parking lot